

On a **Positive** Note, Some Stress Is Good

Good stress, called **eustress**, is vital to performing your best. When you feel motivated to work hard, excel, win or get ahead, you're experiencing eustress. However, when you feel overwhelmed or unable to cope with life's challenges, the resulting stress can lead to health problems.

Learn to distinguish eustress from unhealthy stress and take corrective action to maintain a positive balance.



When to **Get Help** for Stress

Are you experiencing any of these possible stress-related symptoms?

- Restlessness and anxiety
- Inability to concentrate
- Trouble falling asleep
- Lack of appetite or overeating
- Nightmares
- Persistent fatigue
- Depression
- Indigestion
- Teeth grinding
- Tension headaches
- Heart palpitations
- Muscle spasms
- Persistent backache
- Trembling or shaking

note: If these symptoms become chronic or severe, talk to your health care provider.

Stress Less at Work



- **Feel in charge of your success.** Find an activity that gives you a sense of purpose.
- **Build your skills.** The more competent and confident you feel, the less stress you will experience.
- **Set aside worry time.** If you're troubled by a situation, set aside time to resolve it later.
- **Count to 10.** When something angers you, take time to defuse before you react (and regret it).
- **Move forward.** Don't dwell on past negative situations. Look at tomorrow as a new day.
- **Deal with traumatic events.** If you're having difficulty coping following a traumatic event, professional help may speed your recovery.
- **Take your vacation.** Time off can boost your motivation, morale and happiness.

Bottom line: Everyone copes with stress differently. What works to relieve stress for others may not work for you. Keep trying different healthy ways until you find what works best.

wellness works ³⁶⁵

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21 Ways to Manage Everyday Stress

Proven Stress Relievers for Work & Home





People usually feel stress as tension, fear or pressure. Physically, stress causes your heart to race and your muscles to tighten, and you become pumped up, ready for anything. This is a useful response during an emergency when you need to act fast. But when you're stuck in traffic, sitting in a meeting or lying in bed trying to sleep, your thoughts can trigger stress, which causes your body and mind to race needlessly.

Trouble is, your mind and body can't tolerate high levels of stress for long periods. Living in a prolonged state of red alert can leave you feeling burned out and can make you more vulnerable to illness.

21 Ways to Manage Everyday Stress

1. Sleep well. Lack of sleep decreases your ability to handle stress. **Your target:** Try to get 7 to 9 hours of uninterrupted sleep. If sleep problems persist, talk to your health care provider.

2. Move more. Regular exercise releases tense muscles and relaxes your mind. How active are you really? Get at least 150 minutes of exercise weekly.



3. Eat well. Nourish your body and control portions with small servings.

4. Plan ahead. If a stressful event is coming up, prepare for it. Plan your coping strategies and line up support.

5. Cut back on caffeine. Caffeine stimulates you, much like stress, raising heart rate and blood pressure. **Better:** Drink water instead.

6. Relax your body. Once a day, tense and then slowly relax each muscle group from your head to toes.

7. Relax your mind. Take a mental time-out for 15 to 20 minutes daily. Meditate, dream or listen to music — what's best for you?



8. Take an imaginary vacation. Close your eyes and picture a quiet scene, on a mountain, in a meadow or by the ocean.

9. Maximize your energy. If possible tackle difficult work when you're rested and alert.

10. Get involved. Helping others keeps you from blowing your own problems out of proportion. **Ideas:** Join a group or volunteer.



11. Avoid rushing. Leave earlier to arrive on time for meetings and other commitments.

12. Stop procrastinating. Make a list of the top 5 tasks you need to complete today.

13. Talk it out. Use your personal support system of family, friends, coworkers or a mental health counsellor to help find solutions.

14. Blow off steam. Release tension in healthy ways. Go for a jog, write down your worries or try a new hobby.

15. Breathe out stress. Take a deep breath all the way down to your belly button and exhale slowly. Repeat until you feel calmer.



16. Laugh. It's a great way to release stress, and it gives your heart and lungs a mini aerobic workout.

17. Change negative self-talk. Change "*I can't do anything right*" to "*I can.*"

18. Spoil yourself. Watch a movie, get a massage or read a good book.

19. Be thankful. At the end of each day, list the good things that happened. You'll be surprised at how much went right.

20. Get help if you need it. Talk to your health care provider or professional counsellor if you're unable to control stress.

21. Accept change. Consider change as a natural state that presents opportunities.